CLAIMS

1. A method of identifying an evidence-based answer to a clinical question,
comprising electronically searching a plurality of scientific publications to yield an answer,
wherein said answer comprises search results, at least 10% of said results comprising a
randomized controlled trial.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein at least 10% of said results of a broad search
comprise an evidence level of 3 or above.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein at least 10% of said results of a focused
search comprise an evidence level of at least 1.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the usefulness of said search results is at least
10 points higher compared to a standard MEDLINE/PubMed search.

5. A method of formulating a database search, the method comprising:
prompting for search terms in any of a plurality of categories;
prompting for selection of at least one relevant subject matter;
automatically associating synonyms of received search terms, if any, with the
received search terms, the synonyms being predetermined to be relevant to the associated
search terms; and
automatically associating search criteria and subject matter terms with received
indicia, if any, of at least one desired subject matter.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising combining the received search
terms and the associated synonyms, if any, with the search criteria and the subject matter
terms, if any.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the combining comprises associating the terms
and the criteria through Boolean logic to form a search string.

16

8.   The method of claim 7 further comprising analyzing the search string in association with characteristics of a searchable database to determine a URL associated with the searchable database corresponding to the search string.

9.   The method of claim 5 wherein the categories include a patient problem, intervention/treatment, comparison, and outcome.

10.   The method of claim 5 wherein the at least one relevant subject matter includes clinical area.

11.   The method of claim 5 wherein the at least one relevant subject matter includes a clinical issue.

12.   The method of claim 5 further comprising prompting for selection of a desired search breadth.

13.   The method of claim 5 further comprising prompting for selection of a desired patient age limit.

14. A method of identifying an evidence-based answer to a clinical question using a search engine, the method comprising:

combining search terms and criteria entered by a user of the search engine to define a desired search;

selecting synonyms for the search terms and combining the synonyms with the search terms;

searching a plurality of publications associated with the combination of search terms and synonyms to achieve a desired outcome; and

returning to the user at least one randomized controlled trial pertinent to the desired search as a search result.

15.   The method of claim 14 wherein the search terms include one of a problem, an intervention/treatment, a comparison, and an outcome.

17

16. The method of claim 14 wherein the combining comprises associating the search terms and the criteria through Boolean logic to form a search string.

5

17. The method of claim 14 wherein the criteria include at least one of a clinical area and a clinical issue.

18. The method of claim 14 further comprising prompting for selection of a desired search breadth.

10

19. The method of claim 14 further comprising prompting for selection of a desired patient age limit.

15

20